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ABSTRACT

This paper describes and reflects on the pedagogical meaning of a festival held to showcase and celebrate Latin American culture in a North Carolina town undergoing a cultural transition as its Latino population grows. Following a successful event the previous year, a 2-day festival was organized to include a soccer tournament, booths selling Latin American food and products, community service agencies, children's activities, cultural exhibits, leadership development workshops, and both a disc jockey and live music. Recently relocated from the Southwest, the Chicano ethnographer found himself moving beyond description to grapple with the broader context of the cultural dynamics at play and questions of identity--his own and others'. A "double-voiced" analysis examines community and personal aspects of the experience. The paper tells the story of cultural workers, negotiating space and co-constructing a renewing social memory. It addresses transfusion of culture, reinvention of self, and ongoing assessment of status and condition in a new social context. The festival is framed as a site of cultural production and practice: a site of symbolic contestation, inherently pedagogical and expressive. Cultural images and myths from lived experience become a viable form of knowledge to be reworked and reinterpreted. Past, present, and future are woven together to become an educative enterprise that shapes the town's social and cultural landscape. This ethnographic account explores those moments of dynamic interplay between researcher and subject when experience becomes expression; autobiography becomes discourse; and in the passageway between worlds, one intermittent and emergent identity informs the other. Contains 51 references. (SV)

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Pedagogy of a Latin-American Festival:

a mojado ethnography

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Like a guerrilla vato, I try to sneak across the cultural battleground, trying to go un-noticed, strategically securing a temporary sanctuary.
Like a migrant intellectual, a bracero doctorate student, I till the fields of identity, joining in with others, sowing a renewed social memory.
Like a mojado (wetback) ethnographer, I attempt to cross an artificial border; into occupied academic territory, searching for a coyote to secure my safe passage.
-personal notes

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"The work takes place wherever we're at." bell hooks (in communication)

Preface - December 1995

The town of Twin Springs, North Carolina is in the midst of a transitioning cultural process, one that is altering the racial landscape as we speak. An obscure number of people of Latin-American descent, characteristically with middle class socioeconomic status have resided in this town for some years now. However, every day, particularly since the last five to seven years, more and more poor Latinos are fleeing their homelands, skipping the Southwest territories, to resettle in the American South.

One result was the creation of an organization called La Gente, Inc.. Initially, it was organized to showcase a Latin-American Festival for North Carolinians. However, *"In a matter of two years, we have evolved into something much bigger"* (organization document, 1995). This is, what festival organizers claim to be, *"a demonstration of how much our state's Latin community has grown."* The organizational goals now include: *"to showcase the diverse Latin culture, to create a network between people and organizations concerned with Latinos, to provide low-cost, family fun for all North Carolinians through La Festival Latina, and to develop and organize the community through Leadership Development initiatives"* (organization document, 1995).

The present qualitative inquiry was conducted within the context(space/time/event) of the final planning and implementation of the festival organized as a *"celebration of Latin-American culture."* Last year (1994) was the first year for this one day event called La Festival Latina and was deemed a success. Being the first in this entire area of its kind, the organizers of this event organized a second annual festival, enlarging it to two days and securing resources and money

from more than 40 business sponsors. This second annual festival was held in September and included a soccer tournament, booths selling Latin-American food and products, community service agencies, children's games and activities, cultural exhibits, leadership development workshops, and both a D.J. and live music.

The original and sole purpose of this study was to research the origins of the festival, the organizational networking, volunteer recruitment, fund-raising, decision making in activities of actual events, the representations and characterizations of Latin-American culture, and the subsequent activities and roles of the chief organizers. *Pero del dicho al hecho, hay mucho trecho!* Instead, I found myself thinking about the broader context of the cultural dynamics at play, and once again, questioning my identity. I found myself being homesick and nostalgic for my family, friends, and the organic ties with community organizations in the Southwest. I joined the planning committee late in the game, and participated only peripherally, but I took refuge in the brief moments of solidarity and collectivity, enough to cope momentarily with my new condition.

Simultaneously, I was grappling with my ideal to marry my political practice with ethnographic research in battling to name the world. Simultaneously again, I found myself in a circle of learners at UNC-CH social foundations, exploring the possibilities and limits of qualitative research methods and academic praxis in general. This ethnographic account is divided into two sections; I. Celebrating together and II. A Double-Voiced Analysis. It is an account that slices into a recent life experience, having relocated myself from *Califaztlan* to *Carolina Del Norte*; and as it intersected with the final planning stage and subsequent showcased two-day Latin-American festival.

It is the story of cultural workers, negotiating space, and co-constructing a renewing

social memory. It is about the transfusion of culture, a reinvention of self, and an ongoing assessment of status and condition in a new social context. It is a self-framed narrative that dialectically dialogues with a simultaneously framed narrative by a Latin-American festival. Like a public text that can be read, the framed narrative becomes a performance, a celebration, a parody, a ritual prescription, a multi-layered social form of praxis that generates new, emergent and intermittent identities.

Through sociological and anthropological analyses, the Festival Latina is framed as a **site of cultural production and practice**, a site of symbolic contestation, inherently pedagogical and expressive. Cultural images and myths from lived experience become a viable form of knowledge, which are reworked and reinterpreted. Past, Present, and Future are woven together to become an educative enterprise that shapes the social and cultural landscape of Twin Springs.

This ethnographic account is **not** meant to be an *"insider's"* privileged view nor the *"Latino"* perspective nor the *"true"* minute-by-minute record of the festival and its planning. **Rather,** it is an exploration of those moments of dynamic interplay, circular causation, and complexities that arise when the *"translated"* become the *"translator,"* the "narrated" become the *"narrator,"* the *"object"* become the *"subject,"* the *"other"* become the *"researcher,"* **experience** becomes **expression, autobiography** becomes **discourse,** and in the passage way between worlds; **how one intermittent and emergent identity informs the other.**

* Many individuals, place-names, and events have been replaced with pseudonyms in order to maintain confidentiality in a manner so as to avoid any cause for personal identification or harm.

I. Celebrating Together!

La Gente, Inc. is made up entirely of volunteers: from doctors to teens to journalists to homemakers, all who share a strong sense of community. Although many speak Spanish, not all do. Our funding stems from a variety of organizations and businesses who support our activities.
--La Gente Inc. Document

Cultural Exchange and Fellowship

"The problem was not getting people's trust, but what to do with it when it came."
--Penelope Eckert (1989)

Within a month of finishing my Masters degree in Educational Foundations from Cal State Los Angeles, I had relocated to NC to begin my Doctorate Program. In a matter of three weeks I had settled in, anticipating my first semester in field techniques. In the meantime, I would try to *"hook up"* with any Chicano activist scene here in Twin Springs. Wishing for too much, and realizing that my categories of the world don't necessarily exist here nor can be imported, I jumped at the opportunity to attend a planning meeting for a Latin-American festival. I had heard about it from conversation. I saw it as an opportunity to network and perhaps find what I though would be nostalgic and homesick individuals like myself. I first entered the scene of my research project as just an outsider who wanted to be informed. However, I seemed to agree with the advocacy work that could come about by organizing a Latino festival. I liked what I heard at my first meeting and volunteered my help and the benefit of some experience of numerous years as a community organizer. I made sure though that my participation would be only peripheral, after all I was coming to this university and State to become a *"good"* ethnographer.

To back up a bit, the organizing meeting took place on a Saturday at the Twin Springs Town Hall. As I entered, I was asked if I were there for the festival meeting. Answering *"yes,"* several people introduced themselves to me. I was given a name sticker and shown the pictures and newspaper articles from last year's event. Mike Morales, whom I later found out to be a key

organizer, approached me to introduce himself. He asked me if I was part Native-American because of my long hair. He explained why he was asking me this, in the context that last year, Chief Redtail from the local indigenous people, had officially welcomed Latinos to this area through a ceremony at the event. He said perhaps I could serve as a liaison for the event. I stated my interest in the idea. I was thrilled at the thought of participating in this manner. I also saw an opportunity to become invited to ceremony for prayer.

Throughout my conversation in the hall, many people had arrived. Almost everyone brought food, finger snacks, or drinks. I felt bad since I had not brought anything. I had violated the *"Latino"* custom of never arriving anywhere empty-handed. Mike assured me it was OK. Everyone was called to sit down in the meeting room. Pat Gorman, another chief organizer brought the meeting to order. He first asked Mike to report on the funding. Mike replied that we should first all introduce ourselves. Everyone agreeing, Pat stated that we should all state our names and what country we were from. In circular fashion (clockwise) the 23 or so people each introduced ourselves some in English and some in Spanish. The majority in the room were females, many from countries in South America. Almost everyone was a business owner, a student, or a professional. A few introductions that stuck in my head were, 1)one woman who said with laughter her country was Texas, 2) a man who said he was originally from Los Angeles, and 3) Pat who said though he wasn't Latino, he had lived in Texas and identified with Latinos greatly and emotionally.

When the circle reached me, I chose to introduce myself as a *"Chicano, born and raised in the occupied territories, namely South East L.A., and claimed both sides of the US/Mexican border yet sometimes neither."* I also stated I was a doctorate student at UNC in Education.

Someone immediately asked me if I had worked on community events back in L.A., I named off some of my involvements and a few people said *"we got to talk."* After introductions were over, Mike proceeded to explain that all the funding was in place. He also explained that the gift basket with sage, cedar, tobacco, and sweet grass on the table was last year's gift from the native indigenous people and that they always display it at all the meetings.

At this point; access, entry, and participation seemed easy so far. However, when it occurred to me that this would be a good project for my field techniques class requirement; I **crashed** into a whole new dimension to as the question of my participation and identity. I felt Eckert's dilemma as she described her field work experience, in that she didn't know what to do with people's trust once she had gained it. Like a naive boy, I thought I understood what it meant to be an ethnographer. But really, I had no category for it, I had no place for myself. I had no name for whom I was in this new setting, new school, new home, new condition, and most important, new identity.

I wanted to proceed without seeming as an opportunist to the committee members (just here for a grade in a class); yet needed simultaneously to be intimately involved in some aspects of the festival in order to focus away from the surface to approximate an understanding of the underlying social processes. I wanted to be one of them and sacrifice time and effort for the *"cause,"* (my new cause). In doing so, I thought I could happily enter into a new activist/academic identity for myself. Simultaneously, I felt a need to remain just as an outsider (it was safer); just enough so as to not direct the social interaction but be led by the process of the interaction.

I held back from immersing myself in this new found opportunity to bask in the solidarity

and collectivity. After all, it was the last of the planning meetings before the event and pretty much all the work had been done. I volunteered to join the security team at the days of the event, and that was really the extent of my participation. **What it came down to, was that I was challenged in both my research/participation as well as in the writing of this subsequent ethnography; to proceed not necessarily as a complete outsider to the organizing committee or to the University or to my new North Carolina setting in general; but to assess the real nature of my identity, status and condition in this new cultural context I found myself in.**

Only later, I felt that perhaps it wasn't only I assessing my status, condition and identity; but maybe everyone in that room that day, and maybe everyone who would attend the Festival that weekend!

La Gran Fiesta

Folks from every Latin-American country - and from all over the world - mixed with townfolks and visitors in a true celebration of life, Latino-style.

--Local newspaper from neighboring county (September 1995)

La Gente, Inc. deemed La Festival Latina as a big success; *"Approximately two hundred volunteers helped to organize this event attended by over 13,000 people from all over the state."* On the actual weekend, the festival area was much too large to be everywhere at once; and many smaller events were all happening simultaneously within the larger context. This made any type of systematic observation close too impossible, even if I were to have an entire team of researchers. Instead, I will attempt to give a brief description of the various social activities that took place at each.

Volunteering to work Security I thought was strategic in that I could walk around and

observe bits and pieces of the event while simultaneously doing my share of the work. Though I certainly can't account for a minute-by-minute systematic record of the event, with all its smaller components and activities; I participated in a manner so as to immerse myself as in a naturalistic setting, walking around to where my attention led me. Like reading a book or watching a play, I attempted to just *"hang out,"* study the world around me and decode what I thought were the social cues given and received at each particular micro-context, treating everyone present as a social actor in the drama before me.

Teams from all over Carolina state traveled to the festival to participate in the Soccer Tournament. Standing on the field, I could discern that the vast majority of the people at this section were mostly Mexican and Central American, and a fewer amount of South Americans. Though I couldn't give a precise demographic number, what was most noticeable was that this section was almost *exclusively Latino*, which set it apart from the other sections. The sidelines were filled with whole families; women, men, and children. Again, this set this area apart from any of the other sections. Sidelines were filled with people cheering on the all-male teams. Alongside families were pockets of young men wearing jerseys and shorts, waiting it seemed to get their chance to play on the field.

At the Cultural Exhibit, were original handcrafted pieces of Mexican art and crafts. Many were exact replicas of ancient Mesoamerican artifacts. On the opposite side of the room were paintings of two Latino artists, one from Central America and the other from South America respectively. The portraits were picturesque frames of rural landscapes full of nostalgic colors and textures. In the middle of the room were temporary walls of black and white photographs. An award-winning American photojournalist displayed winning photos of Latino families in

various social settings. The Festival pamphlet read *"the Latin American community is wide and varied in its origins, heritage and culture, and the richness and diversity carries over into its expression of art. The cultural exhibit aspires to showcase the Latin American community's art, culture, and talents and to increase the public's awareness of the artistic treasures offered by the Latin American community."*

There were three separate stages; a Concert Stage, a Gym Stage, and a Band Stage. At the Concert Stage, the Festival Latina was officially opened by Chief Redtail. As a representative of the *original* peoples of this land, he performed a ceremony to cleanse the grounds and to gesture an open welcome to the Latinos to their new North Carolina home. Throughout the weekend, the Concert Stage featured performances by Brazilian and Chilean folk singers, Mexican regional dances, Andean music and popular song to name a few. The Gym Stage, housed inside, featured for the most part Puerto Rican popular music and dance.

The biggest of the three stages was the Band Stage. It was situated in the center of the festival area, nearest the vending booths. In another welcoming ceremony, the Twin Springs Mayor gave an official *"bienvenidos"* address. Following the Mayor, a representative of the Governor's office read a public declaration of support for *Hispanic Heritage Month*. Then after, throughout the weekend, the Band Stage featured almost exclusively Salsa music and dance demonstrations. A Mexican Mariachi played a set. A Nicaraguense played popular Mexican and Central American songs solo on his guitar. In between performances, a D.J. was always on hand to fill the spaces with music and popular songs for the crowd to dance to.

The Dance Area was in front of the Band Stage. Singles and couples danced on the

asphalt as spectators stood by watching and clapping at the end of each song and dance. Most of the music danced to, was Salsa and Merengue. The majority of the people at this section seemed to be Caribbean, many were racially African. Simultaneously, more than any other section of the event, most European-Americans and other non-Latinos were at this area.

Half of the parking lot of this site was converted into a makeshift Marketplace. One section housed Food Booths, 28 in all. Booths sold what was advertised as *"typical food and meals from all over Latin America and the Caribbean."* Another section housed booths for Community Organizations, 31 in all. There were representatives from governmental agencies, health clinics, volunteer self-help groups, and advocacy committees for that work with specific targeted populations like Farmworkers. Next were the Vendors' Booths, 24 in all. Handcrafts and jewelry were sold at retail. Also, present were representatives from the phone company, financial self-help groups, newspapers, travel agents, and insurance groups. The advantage was granted for those who could speak Spanish to potential customers. By far, the most popular groups of this whole section were the ones selling Spanish language books and music. They had two customers for every one customer standing at another booth.

The last two sections I'm noting are the Shuttle drop-off and Children's Games. Since there wasn't enough parking space, festival organizers reserved and rented a special bus service from the city. Anyone who wanted to attend, simply caught the bus to drop them off at the festival grounds. This made the event readily accessible, given one's knowledge of this free service. The Children's Games area featured face painting, piñatas, and a self-expression mural which later was displayed at a *"thank you"* dinner for funding sponsors and volunteers.

A New Standard

"We're setting a new standard here, everyone in Twin Springs has helped us, all the agencies; everybody made this possible" –Mike Morales

During and prior to the event happenings, two other simultaneous processes were taking place. One was a Photo and Video Contest. The competition rules read; *"the goal of the contest is to capture the spirit of the festival in an artistic way."* The winners won cash and gift prizes, and were given public recognition at a ceremony at the Twin Springs Town Hall and featured in the Spanish language newspaper.

The other process was a recruitment campaign for a Leadership Development Initiative, as funded by a large Foundation and Endowment Fund. The purpose of this process is to develop up and coming leadership in the Latino community of North Carolina. Receiving much attention from both local and national organizations, the Initiative Document reads; *"Speakers from a variety of settings will conduct workshops on topics such as Fundraising, Media, Political Action, Grassroots Development, Meeting Facilitation, and Cultural Diversity."*

Rosario Williams, one of the chief organizers, said that this whole experience had *"exceeded her wildest dreams."* In conversation, I learned that after their experience of last year's event (though only one day); had caused that the committee receive a range of calls from 1) candidates for community elections asking for endorsement, to 2) employers asking for referrals for Hispanic construction workers, to 3) people asking questions like *"how many Hispanics live in Charlotte?"* and expecting expert responses.

Musical Note

"Music permeated the scene, as did the diversity of all peoples coming together. At least for a moment frozen in time, the Argentine and the Mexican and the Southern Part of Heaven were as one."
--Local newspaper from neighboring county (September 1995)

There were Media present from the English-speaking press and some large video cameras from small-time Public-Access Spanish language shows. Also, I had noticed flyers for the school board elections stapled along trees in the event area with slogans saying *"vote for me"* written in Spanish. However, all these minutiae were easily overshadowed in the presence of Music and Dance. The music was played loud and dancing became a big spectacle.

Yes the food was good, and *yes* one could buy a handmade craft, but the Band Stage and Dance Area, along with the Soccer Tournament, were the aspects that I observed being most videotaped and photographed. They were where the large majority of the people in attendance gave their attention to, and physically revolved around. By far, it was music that stood out the most, it was louder than even the cheering crowds on the soccer filed sidelines. It was heard inside the cultural exhibit, and the first sound stepping off the bus. Here are some of the responses in conversation with others about music and its role at this festival:

D.J. - *"Music is how we show our joy and happiness, and Latinos are a cheerful people."*

Vendor - *"Music is something we carry with us everywhere we go, we just happen to be in North Carolina. It's important to share it with others. It makes us feel good. It's one of the cornerstones of our culture."*

Vendor - *"Music makes me feel happy, even when I'm cooking I listen to it. I forget about work and pressures. It keeps my family going."*

Public - *"Music is the best. It helps you when you're sad or homesick. Here, for example, its unifying the people."*

Public - *"Music unifies all the Latinos, regardless of country. It doesn't distinguish or discriminate based on color."*

Public - *"I listen to music after work, to forget and put the day behind me."*

Musician - *"Music is a way to express our way of life and feelings. Music is a popular yet very precious art where we address our values; both to each other, and members of other communities."*

II. A Double-Voiced Analysis.

Metaphor, Meaning, and Performance.

" Whether found in the museum or at a garage sale,
culture is always already laced with the politics of conflicting ideologies."
--Renato Rosaldo (1989)

The Fiesta Latina was made up of real people and actual events, which I've tried to weave into this text. However, to make sense of some of it, I have looked more closely to the metaphors that have framed this narrative event. Two dominant metaphors were *celebration* and *culture.* Combined, the festival was characterized as *"a celebration of culture"* (organization document, 1995). Seemingly *"innocent and neutral"* words, these metaphors, as the narrative event itself, didn't portray a surface level of antagonism or opposition, nor any indication of a stark ideological leaning, nor a sense that this is part of a larger political and social movement.

However, in trying to penetrate past the surface, to the underlying social processes at play, I place the metaphors as a *performance.* It is not to approximate an understanding of the event happenings, but rather, chiefly to that of the process and actions of the organizers themselves. This performance paradigm moves away from emphasizing *products* toward one of *process* (Turner, 1983; Conquergood, 1986a). This epistemological shift locates the festival not as just a weekend event, product of hard work; to one indicative of the larger social processes at play in Twin Springs, North Carolina. Celebration and culture are not stagnant, rigid, and independent objects; but rather *public, procedural, and ideological responses* by the festival organizers that may characterize their interpretations of the changing social context, and by extension, constituted the pedagogical meaning of the festival. The textual responses lead to intermittent emergent identities of the festival founders and organizers; and by extension are made available to the

volunteers, and by further extension are made available to the individuals and groups attending the weekend event.

Despite one organizer's public remark that *"La Gente, Inc. is not a political group,"* the very *social construction* of the ideological responses to the new influx of Spanish speaking immigrants, and the intermittent emergent identities as founders/organizers, by extension, volunteers/participants are inherently *political* in nature. Further, the metaphors of celebration and culture, as well as each festival activity, had underlying assumptions *"laced"* with ideology. The planning, implementation, fundraising, advertising, and recruitment for the festival offer *"bits and pieces of a worldview"* (Goffman, 1974). As a *public performance*, the festival by extension becomes inherently *pedagogical*.

Viewing this Latin American Festival as a construction of a Pedagogy is strategic to begin understanding one layer of many *culturally commemorative practices* taking place among Latinos in North Carolina and the American South in general; that serve to not only tap into a historical memory but simultaneously construct a *renewed* popular social memory that *"elicits a reformation of consciousness and imagination"* (Kaye, 1991; Simon, 1994). While it may be obvious that particular *sites* such as TV and schools *"incorporate a capability for reaching far more people than others,"* and given that not all people have *"equal access to the use of sites"*; what makes usefully a closer look at the fiesta, is that it is an example where *"certain groups agencies defined by particular communities of interest have control of commemorative practices enabling certain memories and forms of remembrance to become dominant across a public sphere"* (Simon, 1994). I believe this is of major significance in this town, and I put it forth as an example of a local knowledge worth noting; and to further reject any one totalizing

theory of education that is *"blind to local conditions and understandings"*(Haraway, 1988; Levinson and Holland, in press).

I agree with the argument set forth by Levinson and Holland (in press) that *"local analyses must retain a critical perspective on political economy and dominant socio-ideological formations, without losing sight of the particular contingencies and cultural dynamics which characterize local sites."* I am not naive enough to believe that this festival acted as a homogenous symbolic site that has become more powerful in its representations, knowledge and formation of subjectivities as that put forth by TV and schools in Twin Springs. But given the historical circumstances of the *recentness* of this production of popular social memory, and the scarcity of *localized* popular remembrances of competing cultural images (hegemonic or otherwise); the Festival Latina may have momentarily equaled or surpassed even schools and TV, only just for the short weekend, as the key educational undertaking among Latinos in Twin Springs and surrounding areas.

Live Production and Living Practices.

Is it culture shock; a desperate attempt to maintain a heritage?
--personal notes

Though the site of La Festival Latina does not necessarily portray any consistent prolonged cultural images in the now ever-so-intensifying cultural politics of Twin Springs; the imprint left, is in fact a production of a contradictory resource to that of popular media and formal schools. This resource is visibly performed in the last minute improvised orchestrations of some events on the weekend itself. However, the festival is just the *home run,* where the arduous tasks really take place behind the scenes, *loading up the bases.*

The activities of organizing have produced a competing cultural model of "*Latino*" in the small section of the American South. Expanding the notion of the concept and practices of Education to go beyond the parameters of formal schooling to that which seeks "*to understand the process and content of cultural transfer*"(Bailyn, 1960), it becomes apparent that this model is elevated as a **vital educative link** between locally increasing cultural practices of Latinos **and** the Anglo Twin Springs economy and community. The model is legitimized by the over 40 local/ state sponsors and funders that "buy into" the festival; including the town government, arts council, major business franchises, major banks, public museums, church groups, and private professional agencies.

This localized form is fundamentally significant placed in a context of *cultural production* and *practice* theory. This emergent identity and model is that of a "*culturally variable educated person*" (Levinson and Holland, in press); risen from a bilingual/bicultural lived experience that is reconstituted a new vantage meaning in light of the altering cultural/ racial/social landscape and perceived presence of two major constituencies. The festival is the expression and projection of the founders'/organizers' consciousness and subjectivity created **within** the process and practice of organizing it. In circular causation, the intermittent model and identity of *Latino* becomes that of *liaison* or *cultural bridge* or *cultural interpreter*; that must seek to manage and accommodate both sides.

The complexities involved are interpretations and responses to stimuli projecting from multiple layers and culturally specific segments of the local context. In dynamic interplay of "*Self*" and *Society*" (societies in this case), "*the ground-of-being of the autonomous Self is displaced by the experience-of-becoming a performing Self that enacts its identities within a*

community of others" (Conquergood, 1986b). The model and identity of an "*educated person*" is not only made available informally through contact and example at the festival and its planning, but extended formally through active recruitment and secured funding for the "*Leadership Development Initiative*."

Tell All!

"A genre, a hybrid form that inscribes the double voices of a native speaker and a translator."
--Ruth Behar (1993)

The use of metaphor and phrase-names like: celebrating together, samplings of culture, authentic and typical food, diversity, awareness, music and dance, richness, and sharing; in both languages, become *"conventionalized instruments,"* a sort of situating device like those explored by Basso (1984) in his work among Western Apache storytellers. They allow the festival organizers, as **narrators**, to draw in listeners into the *"discursive field"*(Foucalt, 1972) of the event's planning, fundraising, and performance. This process typifies an *"impression management"* (Habermas, 1985; Foley, 1990) in the presence of two major constituencies the organizers are concerned with; Whites and Latinos.

This bilingual/bicultural middle-class communicative style allows for the organizers to manage the image of the festival, and more importantly the image of themselves. They can get people from both constituencies to *join in,* either as funding sponsors, vendors, non-profits, musicians, soccer players, or just as someone attending the event. This is **not** to say that the founders/organizers are deceitful, but rather that their very social construction allows for a manipulation and utilization of different "*discursive resources*"(Foley, in press); unavailable readily to recently-arrived poor Latinos, as is also to the established, stable, and monolingual White Twin Springs community.

This entrepreneurial style, an indispensable resource for wide participation, has a "*dramaturgical*" quality (Goffman, 1967). It allowed for a management and performance of the images being conveyed, to both constituencies of Whites and Latinos, about the identities, status, and conditions enacted in light of the changing social situation. The organizers, and by extension the volunteers and participants, witnessed the performances (in some case their own) and constructions of emergent ethnic identities in the arena of a complex, social, political, and historical process. It is a prime example of cultural workers in an evolving context, making sense of the world(s), in light of the obstacle(opportunity) of *"no stable essential cultural identities which are transmitted unproblematically from generation to generation"* (Foley, in press).

Performance and Identity melted as one, when I walked into this context of the festival planning, as well did when I joined this academic community. They were as one even before, but perhaps more pronounced at this moment. Moreover, as a "*native*" ethnographer, attached to both sites of production(but in different ways and degrees), I join in on the *"dialogical performance"* (Buber, Bacon, and Bakhtin, in Conquergood, 1985). As I claim this liminal moment between experience and expression, between myth and reality; this ethnographic account is the performance and enactment of my emergent identity as ethnographer. As Turner (1986) states, "*we are social beings, and we want to tell what we have learned from experience.*" I contextualize this inquiry as such, so as to move toward an ethic of holism. With the nature of synthesis in mind, the ideal driving my attempt at double-voiced qualitative research must become to "*learn all, take all into account, and tell all*" (Noblit and Engel, 1991).

Identity, Dialogue and Dilemma

How am I complicit in the manipulation of my identity such that I participate in my own colonization and marginalization, and by extension that of my own people?
-- Sofia Villenas (in communication)

This *Latino* identity as *bridge* and *interpreter*, as practiced and performed, is only one in multiple emergent *Latino* identities up for grabs in Twin Springs, and the American South for that matter. Framed institutionally in the naming and formation of La Gente, Inc., the social construction of this intermittent emergent identity is itself a contestation to any notions and perceptions of a monolithic Latino culture and identity. It has involved an interrogative process of values, beliefs, images; and a reinterpretation of a historical memory as well as joining the dialogical partnership in a renewing social memory.

Further, its social construction is itself also a deterritorializing element to any universalizing gestures about common identity born of common history and culture. The festival, as well as the peoples involved, as well as the subjectivities produced and performed in the process; is provoking a memory/narrative of *discovery* and *difference* in an otherwise modernistic and propagandistic discourse of a monolithic American South. Naming this memory/narrative as a *recovery* or a *contestation*, may be no less than what Simon (1994) writes in his analysis of counter-commemoration in that *"we situate ourselves in certain relations to the Other within narratives that orient our actions toward the Other."*

Serving as the *bridge*, managing and accommodating to at least two perceived major constituencies becomes a potential source of dilemma (if one problematizes it as such). Is there a fine line that's crossed that makes a parody... parodic, a myth... fictional, a performance ...deceptive, and a story into a lie? The dilemma in the organization and performance of the festival is found in the parodic portrayals and voyeuristic objectification of Latin American

culture; and by extension themselves. This is evident in naming representations and characterizations as *authentic* or *showcased* or *a sampling*. It is evident when culture is *on exhibit* or is a *celebration* of it as such.

The *colonizer/colonized dilemma* (Villenas, in communication) is exacerbated when the *"performance dialogue"* bifurcates culture from its historic genealogy, detaching it from its site of production; simply by *narrating* an account. The festival that I witnessed and participated in, may be seen as no more than a show arena for the re-enactment of popular Latin-American leisure activities like playing the sport of soccer or music/dance; and further, exhibiting products of art and other historically constructed forms disembodied of their original intent. A cultural context is supplanted when the representations and characterizations of Latin American culture, like art, carry an *"exhibition value"* (Benjamin, 1969; Sarris, 1993).

The festival was typified by an open willingness to *"celebrate together"* regardless of race, language, or social condition; and its planning and implementation were open and free to any volunteers like myself who were willing to donate time for the *cause*. The planners did well to incorporate a plurality of voices and a multiplicity of Latin American cultural forms without any one national identity dominating; as well as accommodating and making needed resources available and accessible to those in attendance. But while there was a moral desire to maximize group effectiveness and an allowance for varying individual/group *performances*, a fundamental dilemma is faced when potentially *"the object produced by a marginalized culture loses its connection to the culture from which it came along, with its differences and its history"* (Sarris, 1993).

Traveling on the Circle of Stories.

"Who are you?" someone asks.
"I am the story of myself," comes the answer.
--N. Scott Momaday (1991)

In this ethnographic account, *"whether particular responses constitute resistance and the possible birth of a social movement that will ultimately challenge the status quo"* (Holland and Eisenhart, 1990); is left up to the reader for possible determination. By the same token, I cannot assess the level of "*intentionality*" in the conscious practices of *"interpretation, imagination, and remembrance"* (Bowers, 1987). Instead, I extend deference to each organizer, volunteer, vendor, funder, and attending participant who came in contact with any aspect of the festival; for each person's narrative of the world, being such that *"it is impossible to identify a single mode of knowing"* (Luttrell, 1989).

I am not pretending that my ethnographic narrative is free of any *"exhibition value,"* or that my account is any more *authentic* or less *parodic* than the festival organizers' representations and characterizations of Latinos. This account is the story of cultural exchange and dilemmas, in an emergent and intermittent identity as *Latino* in the American South. It is also my account of personal dilemmas in an emergent and intermittent identity as Chicano Ethnographer in an academic context. Overall, this account may simply be an exploration of the complexities and negotiations in using *discourse* for *self-description*.

As the negotiation takes place, **like an intimate dance** between the discrepant worlds of *solitude* and *solidarity, private* and *public, home* and *school, university* and *community, discovery* and *recovery, life experience* and *critical expression, image* and *imprint*; **the truth value of this ethnographic account lies in the biases, purposes, and assumptions of both the readers as**

well as this writer. *This border, this split, may estrange us and momentarily render us helpless. We may abandon one for the other.*

But where this dialogical encounter " *does not guarantee 'conscientizacao' (Freire, 1970)"* (Sarris, 1993), this narrative of a narrative, this text of a text; is my reflexive rhythm, my *liminal space*, my dream scape, my catharsis, my de-colonizing moment, and my intermittent emergent identity. *It is all I have, the only story I own.*

It is the beat of my racing heart, the quiet chant I offer to the wind. Motionless, *"betwixt and between"* (van Gennep, 1975), in this state of *dramatic exertion*; I struggle and I'm tired -- but it's **where I'm free of both**. I stand here, alone, like before, facing the setting sun, searching always..., always for a coyote to secure my safe passage.

The Joke ends but the Humor continues,
The Image ends but the Imprint continues,
The Experience ends but the Expression continues,
The Story ends but the Circle continues.
--personal notes

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